



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Edinburgh Research Explorer

The UK's EU Renegotiation

Citation for published version:

Rosamond, B, *The UK's EU Renegotiation: View from Denmark*, 2016, Web publication/site, European Futures, Edinburgh. <<https://www.europeanfutures.ed.ac.uk/the-uks-eu-renegotiation-view-from-denmark/>>

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publisher Rights Statement:

© 2016 Ben Rosamond. Published under Creative Commons (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 International) License

General rights

Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Edinburgh Research Explorer is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy

The University of Edinburgh has made every reasonable effort to ensure that Edinburgh Research Explorer content complies with UK legislation. If you believe that the public display of this file breaches copyright please contact openaccess@ed.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.



The UK's EU Renegotiation: View from Denmark

Author(s): Ben Rosamond

Permalink: <http://www.europeanfutures.ed.ac.uk/article-2883>

Publication: 19 February 2016

Article text:

*The Danish government has been a reliable supporter of the UK's renegotiation of its EU membership, writes **Ben Rosamond**. He notes that, in the context of Denmark's own ambivalent relationship with the EU, keeping the UK in can be used to argue that the EU remains good for Denmark as well.*

David Cameron is not without allies amongst fellow heads of government meeting at the European Council in Brussels, but it would be hard to find a stauncher supporter of the UK's negotiating position than Lars Løkke Rasmussen, the Prime Minister of Denmark.

As the summit began, Lars Løkke Rasmussen went out of his way to suggest that Denmark would happily endorse the pre-meeting [draft agreement](#) without amendment. This reflects a close proximity between the preferences of the Danish and UK governments on issues such as the payment of child benefit to intra-EU migrants. But Rasmussen has also [expressed the view](#) that the other Member States need to give Cameron a deal that will enable him to win the Brexit referendum.

The Danish PM has also been outspoken in his advocacy of a much tighter immigration and asylum regime within the EU. He has also identified his government as a supporter of Austria's [controversial plan](#) to limit asylum claims to 80 per day.

Of course, Denmark is no stranger to taking an ambivalent stance towards European integration. Since 1993 it has had four [opt-outs](#) from key areas of the EU treaties. In a referendum held last December on one of these – Justice and Home Affairs – the Danish people voted to retain the opt-out (a result [seized upon with glee](#) by Eurosceptics in the UK).

The prevailing 'Danish view of the EU' (if it can be called that) is one source of explanation for the PM's support for Cameron in Brussels this week. But it should also be noted that Rasmussen leads a single party minority government that relies on the parliamentary support of the Danish People's Party (DF). DF (which now routinely polls at around 20 per cent) is not openly hostile to the EU (or Denmark's membership thereof), but also espouses a populist–nativist line on immigration.

Rasmussen's statecraft in relation to the EU needs to be understood in light of these domestic conditions. Denmark's harsh line on immigration, exemplified by the recent so-called '[jewellery law](#)' (also supported, it should be noted, by the Social

Democrats) reflects the extent to which the DF's position has become mainstreamed in Danish political discourse.

Making loud noises about immigration, and [skirting the boundaries](#) of international law in so doing, has the effect of drawing attention away from the more existential question of Danish membership of the EU. And working hard to keep the UK in the club becomes a device to persuade Danish voters that the EU continues to be compatible with Denmark's interests.

Author information:

Ben Rosamond

The University of Copenhagen

Prof Ben Rosamond is Professor of Political Science at the University of Copenhagen, where he is principal investigator of the interdisciplinary [EuroChallenge](#) research programme. His research interests include European political economy, the European political-economic space, governance and legitimacy and he is Co-Editor of *Comparative European Politics*.

Publication license:

Creative Commons (Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International)

Additional information:

Please note that this article represents the view of the author(s) alone and not European Futures, the Edinburgh Europa Institute nor the University of Edinburgh.